



WYOMING LEGISLATIVE SERVICE OFFICE

Fact Sheet

WYOMING BROADBAND APPROPRIATIONS AND EXPENDITURES, 2011 TO PRESENT

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By Donna Shippen, Deputy Research and Evaluation Administrator

QUESTION:

Provide the total amounts of State and federal funds appropriated or expended for broadband services, including the Wyoming Unified Network, from the time of Governor Mead's administration forward.

ANSWER:

Available budget data indicate approximately \$316 million in State and federal funds have been appropriated by or allocated to the State for broadband development and the Wyoming Unified Network (WUN) since 2011.¹ Expenditures to date total approximately \$145.7 million. See **Table 1** for a summary of appropriations and expenditures.

Table 1. Total State and Federal Appropriations/Allocations and Expenditures, 2011 to present

Years	Program	State Funds		Federal Funds	
		Appropriated	Expended	Allocated	Expended
2011 to present	Wyoming Unified Network (WUN)	\$106 million ²	\$97.7 million	\$ 0	\$ 0
2018 to present	Broadband Development state grant program	\$10 million	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
2020	Connect Wyoming state grant program (CARES Act funds)	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$100 million ³	\$48 million
Anticipated	2021 federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act broadband block grant	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$100 million	\$ 0
TOTAL		\$116 million	\$97.7 million	\$200 million	\$48 million

Source: LSO compiled information from 2010-2021 Wyoming Session Laws, Wyoming Business Council, Enterprise Technology Services, and the U.S. Department of Commerce.

¹ Federal funds reported are funds allocated to the State of Wyoming only and do not include federal grants awarded directly to broadband providers or consumers, local or tribal governments, healthcare providers, or schools and libraries.

² WUN appropriations reflect mostly School Foundation Program funds; General Fund appropriation and expenditure data was available for BFY 2021-2022 only. Please see discussion of WUN network below for more information.

³ Federal guidelines required CARES Act funds to be spent by December 31, 2020. Unexpended CARES Act funds allocated to the Connect Wyoming program were returned to the Governor's Office and are no longer available.

STATEWIDE BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The Wyoming Business Council (WBC) oversees statewide broadband development efforts funded by State and federal monies, including the 2018 Broadband Development state grant program and the 2020 Connect Wyoming CARES Act program. In addition, the State is expected to receive federal funds under the 2021 federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act broadband block grant program. The WBC has recently applied for a National Telecommunications and Information Administration competitive grant to fund broadband expansion.

Wyoming Broadband Development Program

In 2018, the Legislature enacted SF 100 creating the Broadband Development Program, and appropriating \$10 million from the Legislative Stabilization Reserve Account (LSRA) to the Broadband Development subaccount of the Economic Diversification account for the purpose of funding WBC grants for broadband expansion projects to underserved areas of the State. Another \$350,000 from the LSRA was appropriated to the WBC to fund a Broadband Coordinator position.⁴ To date, WBC has not awarded any broadband grants and the \$10 million Broadband Development monies remain unspent.⁵

Connect Wyoming⁶

In 2020, Governor Gordon and the WBC created the Connect Wyoming program and allotted \$100 million of the State's \$1.25 billion CARES Act allocation to fund middle-mile and last-mile broadband internet projects. The Connect Wyoming program received applications for over \$188 million in proposed projects. After reviewing applications, the program qualified projects totaling approximately \$86 million for funding. Federal CARES Act guidelines required all funded work to be contracted and completed by December 31, 2020. Of the \$86 million in qualified projects, \$56 million was awarded to 33 projects with successfully completed contracts but only \$48 million in project costs were invoiced by the December deadline. The \$48 million expenditure funded broadband projects providing 25/3 service⁷ or better to over 12,000 residents across the State. The remaining \$8 million in unexpended funds were returned to the Governor's Office.

2021 Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

Under the 2021 federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Wyoming is expected to receive a \$100 million block grant to fund broadband expansion or affordability.⁸

Other Federal Broadband grant programs

The WBC has applied for a \$30.4 million National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) competitive grant to fund 14 statewide broadband projects that would provide service to 3,600 residents.⁹ NTIA is a bureau of the U.S. Department of Commerce and has principal responsibility for

⁴ 2018 SF 100, enacted March 2018 and codified as W.S. 9-12-1501 through 9-12-1509.

⁵ Information provided by WBC Broadband Manager, January 25, 2022.

⁶ Information provided WBC Broadband Manager, January 25, 2022.

⁷ The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) defines broadband as a minimum speed of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload. [FCC, Broadband Progress Report, 2015](#).

⁸ [U.S. Department of Commerce, Fact Sheet: Department of Commerce's Use of Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal Funding to Help Close the Digital Divide, November 10, 2021](#).

⁹ Information provided by WBC Broadband Manager, January 25, 2022.

advising the President on telecommunications and information policy issues.¹⁰ WBC reports NTIA should notify the State in mid-February 2022 whether or not the grant has been awarded.¹¹

In addition to the NTIA competitive grant program, the federal government provides broadband development funds through programs administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The FCC administers four programs funded by the Universal Service Fund: the Connect America Fund, which awards grants to broadband providers by competitive auction; the Lifeline program for low-income consumers; the Schools and Libraries E-rate program; and the Rural Health Care Program, which provides funding to health care providers.¹² The USDA administers the ReConnect program, which awards competitive grants and loans to broadband providers, state or local governments, or tribal entities.¹³ Although several Wyoming broadband providers have been awarded competitive grants under the FCC Connect America Fund¹⁴ and USDA Reconnect program,¹⁵ those grant monies are not reported in Table 1, above, as the awards were made directly to providers and not the State. The WBC reports the State has not received any grants from the FCC programs or USDA Reconnect program to date.¹⁶

WYOMING UNIFIED NETWORK

The Wyoming Unified Network (WUN) is administered by Enterprise Technology Services (ETS) and funded by State general funds and School Foundation program funds. The WUN network was preceded by the Wyoming Equality Network (WEN), which provided education connectivity to Wyoming K-12 schools and community colleges. After ETS was created in 2012, WEN was transferred from the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) to ETS. In 2016, the State's core network was unified with WEN to create the WUN network.

Enterprise Technology Services reports that WUN Enterprise Core Services and WUN Infrastructure are funded with a combination of State general funds and School Foundation Program funds.¹⁷ ETS provided BFY 2021-2022 general fund and School Foundation fund appropriations and expenditures, and is currently gathering information for previous biennia. LSO was able to retrieve BFY 2011-2012 through BFY 2021-2022 School Foundation Program fund appropriations for the WEN/WUN network infrastructure from Session Law line-item budget information.

WEN/WUN School Foundation fund and general fund data retrieved to date show \$106,083,295 in total appropriations for BFY 2011-2012 through BFY 2021-2022. Available expenditure data total \$97,702,667 to date.

See **Table 2** for WEN/WUN network appropriation and expenditure information retrieved to date.

¹⁰ [NTIA website](#).

¹¹ Information provided by WBC Broadband Manager, January 25, 2022.

¹² [FCC, Universal Service webpage](#).

¹³ [USDA, Reconnect Loan and Grant Program overview](#) webpage.

¹⁴ Wyoming broadband providers who were awarded winning bids in the August 2018 Connect America Fund Phase II auction can be viewed on the [FCC Connect America Fund Phase II: Auction 903 Results](#) interactive map.

¹⁵ All West Communications was awarded a FY 2019 \$4.8 million grant to provide broadband service in rural Sweetwater County. [USDA, Reconnect Program FY2019 Funding Opportunity Announcement Awardees](#) webpage.

¹⁶ Information provided by WBC Broadband Manager, January 25, 2022.

¹⁷ ETS memo to LSO, January 28, 2022

**Table 2. WEN/WUN Infrastructure Appropriations & Expenditures,
BFY 2011-12 through BFY 2021-2022**

Biennium Fiscal Year	Description	Final Appropriations ¹⁸			Expenditures
		General Funds	Other Funds	Total	
BFY 2011-2012	Dept 205 Education School Finance, WEN Infrastructure	N/A	\$11,707,818 S5 ¹⁹	\$11,707,818	\$11,215,803
BFY 2013-2014 ²⁰	WEN Infrastructure Dept 205 Education School Finance Dept 077 ETS	N/A	\$11,800,728 S5 ²¹ \$2,300,000 S5	\$14,100,728	\$14,023,783
BFY 2015-2016	Dept 077 ETS, WEN Infrastructure	N/A	\$19,183,670 S5	\$19,183,670	\$19,157,333
BFY 2017-2018	Dept 077 ETS, WUN Infrastructure ²²	N/A	\$14,918,390 S5	\$14,918,390	\$18,248,615 ²³
BFY 2019-2020	Dept 077 ETS, WUN Infrastructure	N/A	\$21,490,773 S5	\$21,490,773	\$18,090,773
BFY 2021-2022	Dept 077 ETS, WUN Infrastructure and associated expenses	\$7,784,130	\$16,897,786 S5	\$24,681,916	\$16,966,360
TOTAL		\$7,784,130	\$98,299,165	\$106,083,295	\$97,702,667

Source: LSO compiled information from 2011-2021 Session Laws and data provided by ETS and LSO Budget Fiscal.

If you need further information, please contact the LSO Research and Evaluation Division at 307-777-7881.

¹⁸ Final appropriations reported include budget reductions implemented in BFY 2017-2018 and BFY 2021-2022.

¹⁹ S5 = School Foundation Program account

²⁰ 2012 SF 33 created Enterprise Technology Services (ETS) and transferred the Wyoming Equality Network (WEN) from the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) to ETS. Initial funding for ETS, including funding for WEN, was appropriated as part of the 2013 Supplemental Budget Bill HB 0001.

²¹ Total amount funds transferred by B-11 process from WDE to ETS for the WEN Network in BFY 2013-2014.

²² In 2016, the State's core network was unified with WEN to create the Wyoming Unified Network (WUN).

²³ When the BFY 2019-2020 Budget Bill was enacted in March 2018, \$3.4 million of the appropriation was made available immediately and spent during BFY 2017-2018.